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The inevitable conclusion is that Mr. Smith's history is but a tale of a corrupt monarchy and a superstitious church, of political jobbery, rapacity, and governmental maladministration generally; a tale, that is, of human error. Men, and women, too, have left undone those things that they ought to have done and have done those things that they ought not to have done, and Mr. Smith does not hesitate to disclose their faults. We are reminded at times of that "rigid liberalism," of which Lord Acton speaks, "which by repressing the time-test and applying the main rules of morality all round, converts history into a frightful monument of sin." It would seem at times as if the author preferred to make his delinquencies dark that the moral lesson might be the more strongly emphasized. But the resulting impression is wrong. History is not the tale of the vices of men, as Lingard, the French philosophers, Joseph de Maistre, and now Mr. Smith wish to make it. We admire the author's style and his wonderful command of English speech, we respect his point of view and his own chosen method of presenting the subject, but when we have reached the end of his work and look back over the path we have traversed we cannot believe that the conclusions reached and the impressions left are those that the reading public ought to have of the history of the United Kingdom.

CHARLES M. ANDREWS.

The Commune of London and Other Studies. By J. H. ROUND, M.A. (Westminster: Archibald Constable and Co. 1899. Pp. xviii, 336.)

THIS volume contains fifteen essays dealing with the Anglo-Saxon vill, the history of London, Anglo-Norman warfare, the origin of the Exchequer, the conquest of Ireland, the inquest of sheriffs (1170), the coronation of Richard I., the battle of Bannockburn, cornage, the marshalship of England, and other subjects. In fact, so many topics are examined that it is impossible to explain their purport within the limited space allotted to this review. Many of the questions examined are important, and the results attained form a welcome addition to our stock of knowledge, though they are of less general interest than those embodied in Round's *Feudal England*. Both works display the same striking merits: remarkable acuteness in unearthing new materials, masterly analysis and interpretation of charters, clearness of diction, and the accurate presentation of facts. In both works, on the other hand, the narrative sometimes lacks coherence; the author is inclined to magnify the importance of his "discoveries;" and he exhibits undue asperity in his treatment of historians whose statements he cannot accept. *The Commune of London* fairly bristles with polemical paragraphs. Mr. Round's heavy batteries are directed against Hubert Hall; but Kemble, Freeman, Brewer, Archer, Stevenson, Loftie, Oman, Miss Norgate, and other historians are also subjected to a more or less furious cannonade. With less smoke and carnage Mr. Round's merits as an historian of high rank would stand forth more clearly.

The essay which gives its title to the volume deals with the changes that took place in the municipal constitution of London in the year 1191, when the commune was established in that city. Our author maintains that, as a result of this revolutionary movement, the mayoralty of London came into existence; that the "ferm," or annual rent payable to the Crown by the citizens, was reduced from £500 to £300; and that an administrative council called the "skivins" (*échevins*), modelled after that of Rouen, was introduced. It has long been known, from the narrative of contemporary chroniclers, that there was a communal movement in London in 1191, and that John and the barons, in return for the support of the citizens against Longchamp, were obliged to recognize the commune. Mr. Round has discovered the communal oath and other documents which seem to prove that the commune was not merely recognized in theory but actually established, and he presents some new details regarding the municipal organization of London in the time of Richard I. and John. For any new light on the obscure subject of English municipal history in the twelfth century we should be grateful, and that Mr. Round has advanced our knowledge of the government of London in that century no one can deny. He has not however conclusively proved that the model of Rouen or of any other continental municipality was closely followed by London in 1191, or that the communal movement of 1191 had any abiding influence. He ignores the existence of "skivins" in the municipal institutions of other medieval boroughs of England where those officers do not connote a communal government; and his arguments in favor of the view that the commune was the germ of the London Common Council are not convincing, for they hinge mainly on the assumption that the administrative body of twenty-four mentioned in John's reign was copied from Rouen. It is indeed not certain that the council of twenty-four had any direct connection with the struggle of 1191.

That some Continental influence was exerted on English municipal life in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries is probable, but that it had fruitful or abiding results in connection with a communal movement in London or elsewhere has yet to be demonstrated. Richard of Devizes was right when he said that neither Henry II. nor Richard I. would have granted the commune to London for a million marcs. It is difficult to believe that the powerful Plantagenet kings would long tolerate in England communal autonomy such as existed in France; and we know that even the communes of France were undermined or suppressed as soon as the French monarchy asserted its supremacy. Continental influence on English municipal development was probably more potent in the baronial than in the royal boroughs, but the result of that influence in the baronial towns was not the establishment of communes.

As regards matters of detail Mr. Round is usually accurate, but, like other mortals, he occasionally errs. *Scaccarium* means chess-board, exchequer-table, and exchequer, but there seems to be no authority for he meaning "chequered cloth" (p. 94). Mr. Round adheres to the

accepted view that the Exchequer derived its name from the chequered cloth that covered the table on which the accounts were audited. This view does not however receive support from a statement of William Fitz Stephen, quoted in *The Commune of London* (p. 63), that in 1164 John the Marshal was "officially engaged at the quadrangular table, which from its counters (*calculis*) of two colors, is commonly called the Exchequer (*scaccarium*).” The counters evidently resembled *scacci*, or chess-men. Now if Fitz Stephen "knew his London well," as Mr. Round assures us that he did, why not accept his explanation of the name *scaccarium*? Fitz Neal, in his *Dialogue of the Exchequer*, gives a detailed account of the table and explains the origin of the term *scaccarium*; he speaks of a "pannus niger virgis distinctus," but says nothing concerning a chequered cloth. On page 201 Mr. Round informs us, on the authority of Dr. Stubbs, that the writer formerly described as "Benedictus Abbas" is "now virtually known to have been Richard Fitz Nigel;" and yet Dr. Stubbs presented his view merely as "a chance hypothesis," and—convinced of his mistake by Dr. Liebermann's arguments—now admits that "as a mere conjecture it is not worth defending." On page 237 we are told that "Dr. Gross . . . appears to consider these officers (the *échevins*) a purely Continental institution;" but the *Gild Merchant*, I. 26, to which Mr. Round refers in a footnote, calls particular attention to the existence of *échevins* in the gilds of many English boroughs. The fact that the charter of Henry, duke of the Normans, confirmed to the citizens of Rouen (1150–1151) their port at Dowgate, as they held it from the days of Edward the Confessor, is scarcely "unknown to English historians" (p. 246), for it is set forth in a book published by the Clarendon Press several years ago.

These errors, though most of them are of little importance, show that "absolute exactitude in statement," the lack of which among his contemporaries Mr. Round so often deplors, is difficult of attainment even by the most careful historians.

CHARLES GROSS.

Histoire de la Marine Française. I. Les Origines. Par CHARLES DE LA RONCIÈRE, Ancien Membre de l'École Française de Rome. (Paris: E. Plon, Nourrit et Cie. 1899. Pp. 532.)

M. DE LA RONCIÈRE'S *Histoire de la Marine Française* belongs to the class of naval history of which Sir Harris Nicolas's admirable work is the typical example. For his opening volume, *Les Origines*, which carries us from Gallo-Roman times down to the opening year of the Hundred Years' War, M. de la Roncière could not have chosen a better model. Indeed a pleasant note that runs through the whole volume is the French scholar's frank appreciation of his English forerunner. It is equally pleasant to say that not only does M. de la Roncière surpass his model in the literary skill of his narrative passages, but also that wherever he is concerned with the elucidation of obscure points of medieval maritime